

## A LOOK BACK

# Travel Round the World Onboard the Ship *Neva* Performed in 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806

*Urey Lisjanskij*

Introduction and excerpt translated from the Third  
Edition by Dr Paul Horley  
Chernivsi National University, Ukraine

## INTRODUCTION

**Y**uri Fedorovich Lisjanskij (1773-1837) was born in Nezhin, Ukraine. He is one of many famous Russian Navigators [Prohorov 1973:505] and devoted his life to a naval career starting in his youth. At the age of 13, he became a Naval cadet; two years later, he achieved the rank of Warrant Officer. In 1790, he took part in the naval battles of the Russian-Swedish war. Afterwards, he served in the Baltic Fleet from 1790-1793 and became a Lieutenant in 1793. Having outstanding navigation experience, he was one of the chosen officers of the Russian Navy sent to Great Britain to improve their skills. Lisjanskij served in the English Fleet for five years, sailing to the far shores of South Africa, North America, and East-India. In the United States, he visited Boston and Philadelphia and was received by the President of the United States. Being abroad, he mastered English and studied French.

Upon his return to Russia, he was promoted to the rank of Captain-Lieutenant in 1797. In 1803, having participated in 18 naval companies up to that date, he was awarded the Order of St. George of the 4<sup>th</sup> degree for his achievements.

In the same year, he was commanded to England to purchase two ships for the forthcoming Russian expedition round the world. The first ship under his command was named *Neva* (the name of the river on the banks of which St. Petersburg is situated); the second – *Nadezhda* (“hope” in Russian). The crew of the former consisted of 47 persons, and of the latter 58. The expedition opened a new epoch for Russian navigation. Crossing two oceans, the ships were sent to investigate the far away shores of the Pacific isles. They had two different missions to complete: *Neva* was sent to Kodiak to visit the headquarters of the Russian-American Company, while *Nadezhda*, under command of Ivan Kruzenshtern (another famous Russian navigator), had to sail first to Kamchatka and then to Japan, bringing the Russian envoy who was onboard.

In August of 1803, both ships left Kronstadt. They sailed together, sometimes losing each other due to storms and high seas. Upon reaching the Sandwich Islands (Hawai‘i), they separated for a long time to complete their missions and arranged to meet in Canton, China. Sailing through the East Pacific, Lisjanskij visited Easter Island in 1804 – and this current year marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event. He spent several days circumnavigating Rapa Nui and waiting for *Nadezhda* to arrive.

Although the weather made it impossible to come ashore, *Neva* performed detailed exploration of the shoreline, landscape, ceremonial platforms, dwellings of the local inhabitants, and their plantations. The account of Lisjanskij contains valuable information, which might yield a tentative list of shrines still in use in 1804. He counted at least 21 statues still standing (belonging to eight different monuments); two other platforms were mentioned without specifying the number of *moai*.



UREY LISJANSKY

K.G.&V.

Portrait of Yuri Fedorovich Lisjanskij from the Second Edition of his book (Lisjanskij 1947).

After visiting Easter Island, *Neva* then sailed to the Marquesas and Nuku Hiva, where Lisjanskij was reunited with Kruzenshtern, and then they continued on their missions. Both ships met again on their return journey at Canton. They sailed off in August of 1805 and, in a year, returned to Kronstadt after doubling the Cape of Good Hope. *Neva* sailed from Canton to Portsmouth in a single run without either visiting any port or dropping anchor to replenish food and water supplies; this uninterrupted, 142-day-long sail was the first of its kind in the world. Finally, *Neva* returned to Kronstadt, two weeks before the arrival of *Nadezhda*.

The whole expedition took slightly more than three years and yielded invaluable scientific materials, including vast ethnological and naturalistic collections. The important data on ocean characteristics recorded by this expedition (e.g., currents, water density, temperature) made a solid foundation for the first steps of oceanography. During the voyage, Lisjanskij discovered a small island (1.5 by 1.8 kilometers in size) now named after him and belonging to the Hawaiian archipelago. His name was also given to a peninsula in the Sea of Okhotsk.

Upon his return to Russia, Lisianskiy was awarded the Order of St. Vladimir of the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree and was granted a life-long pension. The crew of the ship *Neva* expressed their warmest thanks to the navigator by presenting him with a golden sword engraved with words of gratitude.

Promoted to Captain of the 2<sup>nd</sup> rank, Lisianskiy was appointed to command a detachment of 90 ships and continued to serve in the Baltic Fleet. He retired in 1809 as a Captain of the 1st rank, and started to work on the account of his voyage, which was published in two volumes (Lisianskiy 1812). His book contains numerous observations of scientific importance: detailed descriptions of landscapes, people and their traditions, and observations on meteorology and biology. The book was supplemented with an atlas containing 12 maps, 16 drawings, and 3 tables regarding ethnographic material. He personally financed the publication of the book, obtaining only a partial reimbursement later on from the Naval Department. Lisianskiy himself translated his work into English and published it in London two years later (Lisjanskij 1814).

After retirement, Lisianskiy spent much time with his family. He married Baroness de Brunold and they had two daughters and three sons, one of whom followed the naval career of his father and was eventually promoted to the rank of Admiral. The Great Navigator died in St. Petersburg in 1837; his tomb was decorated with an anchor with a broken anchor chain.

Since 1812, Yuri Lisianskiy's book was reprinted in Russian (as far as we know) only twice (Lisianskiy 1947, 1977), with detailed introductions by N.V. Dumitrashko and A.I. Alekseev, narrating the background and the story of the expedition, and supplying numerous details of his life, which are summarized in this short biographic essay.

The Second Edition underwent intensive stylistic corrections to bring the language of early 19<sup>th</sup> century into a more modern style. Numerous reproductions of the maps from Lisianskiy's atlas were included, together with illustrations from the parallel account of the expedition published by Ivan Kruzenshtern (who also had an artist on board the *Nadezhda*).

## Chapter 4: Sailing from the Island of St. Catherine to the Island of the Holy Easter

Urey Lisjanskij

*Sailing off the island of St. Catherine. – Doubling the Cape of San Juan. – Sailing round Tierra del Fuego. – Separation of the ships because of storm and extremely foggy weather. – The island of St. Easter. – Description of the latter.*

... From April 1<sup>st</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> [1804], the weather was still variable, but the winds blew fainter and squalls came over more seldom. Today I performed observations under [the latitude of] 29°45'S and [longitude] 104°49'W. This longitude could be considered the most accurate, because lunar observations also gave the result of 104°33'. A few days ago, we set the smithy on the deck and started forging axes, knives, big nails, and chisels for the islanders of the Pacific sea.

On [April] 10<sup>th</sup>, I gave an order to attach the cables to the anchors, to be perfectly ready for anchoring at the island of St.

Easter, which I hoped to reach in a short time sailing under the fair wind.

[April] 16<sup>th</sup>. As the squalls started to appear since midnight and the weather seemed variable, in the morning, at three o'clock, I lay to; this continued up to the 7<sup>th</sup> hour, when we stopped heaving to even though the horizon was covered with clouds. At 11 o'clock, we sighted the island of St. Easter lying just ahead of us. At midday, we were at 27°13' of south latitude and 108°34' west longitude. Heading towards WtN since the noon, the ship *Neva* at about 5 o'clock sailed up to the east part of the island. As soon as we approached to the first stone of those lying by its southern end, squalls began to appear all of a sudden from the N and thick gloom shrouded the coasts. Therefore, we turned to E, and reefed [the sails] for the night. Before reaching the island of St. Easter, we saw many small birds of a wild color, which fly like pigeons, but are smaller in size; from this we concluded that we were not so far from the island.

[April] 17<sup>th</sup>. In the morning, the shore was to our W, some 12 miles away. At 8 o'clock, under the wind between N and W we sailed to the southern end, by which two stones<sup>2</sup> are lying; one of these is of quite surprising appearance, because from afar it resembles a ship under topgallant sail set on the mainmast so much, that our navigator mistook it for the ship *Nadezhda*. Sailing past them, we came across many bands of grass [seaweed].

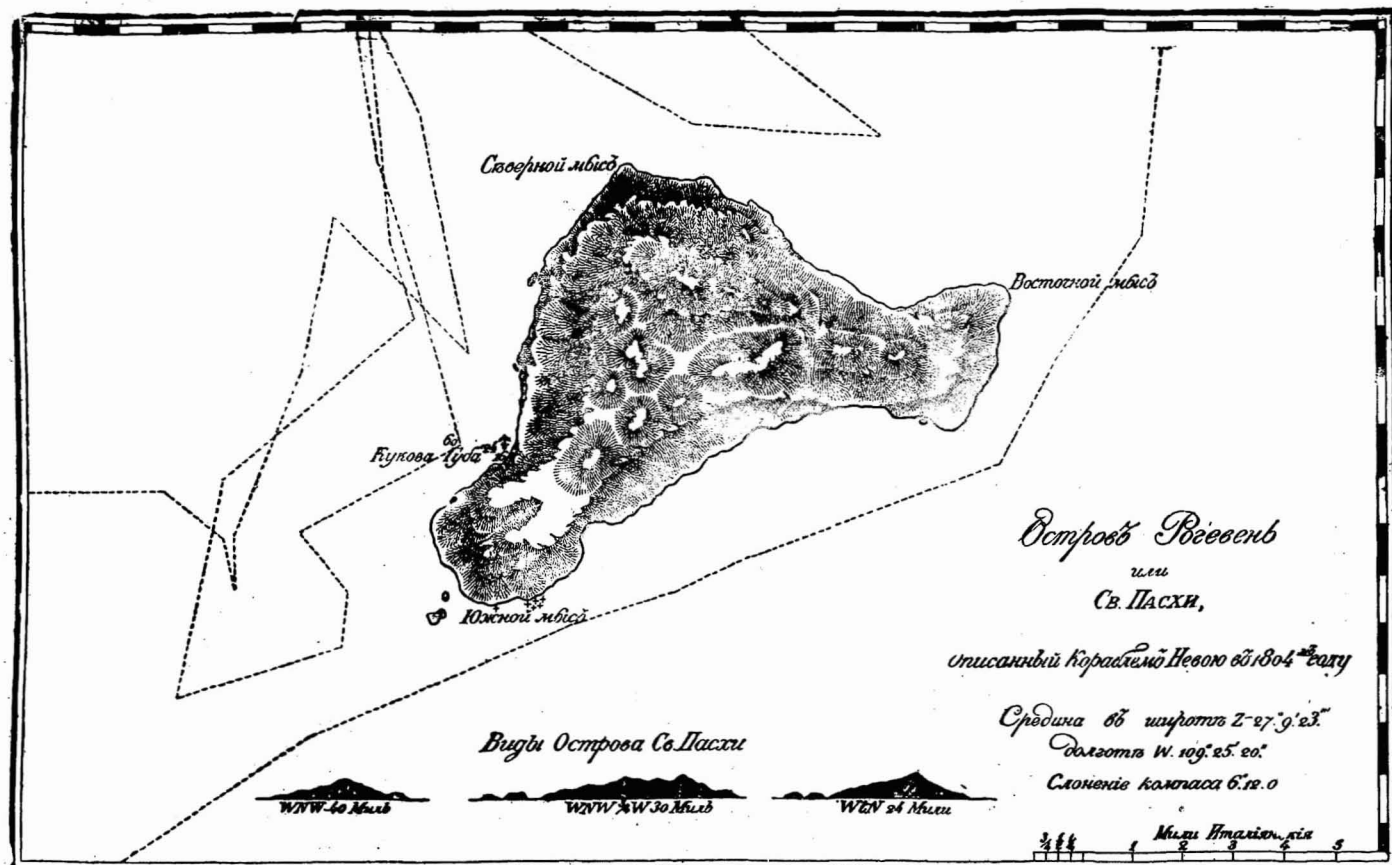
The Island of the Holy Easter from its Eastern side<sup>3</sup> appeared quite pleasant to me. In many places it is covered with verdure; we have seen several alleys of banana trees, quite orderly planted, and bushes, in the vicinity of which the dwellings must be, because yesterday in the evening and today in the morning we have noticed the smoke there. Almost in the very middle of the east shore stand two high black statues<sup>4</sup>, one of which seemed twice as high as the other. Both of them, to my mind, make up some kind of a single monument, as they are positioned nearby each other and both are enclosed within the same palisade<sup>5</sup>. The South part of the island is quite precipitous and consists of rock, which from a distance looks like a slab composed of horizontal layers<sup>6</sup>, on the top of which verdure is seen. Sailing around the southern end, I headed to W till the midday, and then approached the west coast for about three miles. From this position, an anchoring place opened to me with high surf along its shores. Here we noticed several trees and four black idols; three of these were tall and the fourth looked as if it were broken in half<sup>7</sup>. They are standing by the very sea and are the kind of the monuments described in the travelogue of Sr. La Pérouse. Today I would have anchored had I not been concerned of the westerly winds, under which it is dangerous to ride at anchor here. Although the light breeze was blowing from NNW, the rain clouds were coming over sometimes, and judging from the clouds, the weather seemed very changeable.

As I have not met my companion here, I decided to keep waiting for him for several days, and meanwhile to occupy myself with the description of the coasts and to get more acquainted with this curiosity-worth place. To do this I descended to the East side for a second time. We have sailed along it some three miles [from the shore] and to the noon doubled the Eastern cape. Then the clouds, which started ap-

pearing since the morning, accumulated at last, and it started to rain heavily under variable wind; since I did not want to lose my last bearings, then, moving away for about seven miles from the shore, I hove to. The middle of the east part of the island of St. Easter is lower than its extremities and is planted here and there with vegetation; near to these, the dwellings of the islanders are located.

[April 18<sup>th</sup>.] We were so close to the shore that we could see quite clearly the people gathered over it for the sake of curiosity; some of them were running on our heels [along the shore], and others were climbing on the piles of stones. At

ings are located, and the foot of the mountain is surrounded with vegetation<sup>10</sup>. There, quite a vast plantation [of crops] resembling banana was visible to us, along with the others, some of which, as it seemed, were of sugar cane. Although the wind was blowing from NW, the surf was high all along the coast; I have noticed only one sandy place, but this was also littered with such a multitude of stones that by no means could it serve for anchorage<sup>11</sup>. There are many stones [scattered] over the very shore, some of which we mistook for the sitting people; in other places they form big piles, with something white seen on the top. Probably, they were made



Reproduction of Easter Island map from the Atlas of Lisianskiy, as it appears in the Second Edition (Lisianskiy 1947:77). The map shows a somewhat distorted shoreline and marks the most prominent mountains and hills. In general, the scale of the map is accurate; the distances between the main capes verified against modern maps gives an error less than 5%. The course of the *Neva* is shown with dashed line, lacking several segments (those going out of the map frame or passing through the places reserved for inscriptions). All the major islets by the shores of Rapa Nui are shown. A peculiar detail with them (Krendelev 1976:12) is the presence of two islets by the West shore: one corresponding to Motu Tautara and the second, much bigger, located to the north, by the cape that could be identified as Cape Hereke. The modern map shows no islet there, but further to the north, it gives the name "Motu Tavake". The Third Edition of the book is furnished with some modern illustrations, but lacks any reproduction of maps. The language of this reprint was kept free from any stylistic correction, retaining as much as possible the grace and charm of early 19th century Russian.

about 9 o'clock the smoke appeared in many places [on the island]; therefore I concluded that the islanders cooked their food at this hour. There are five monuments standing on the precipitous shore, the first of which we noticed immediately after doubling the southern end. This one is made of four statues<sup>8</sup>. The second is located somewhat further and consists of three idols; then follows the third, the same that we had seen yesterday. The fourth and the fifth are standing closer to the Eastern cape<sup>9</sup>. Beside these two latter, many more dwell-

up on purpose by the local inhabitants and mean something<sup>12</sup>. The people seemed to us naked and of a darkish hue; of animals, we have not seen a single one there. Today a great number of flying fish appeared close to our ship; of sea birds, I have seen only three kinds thus far: tropical and wild ones, which I have already mentioned<sup>13</sup>, and black ones, resembling the latter by both appearance and flight style, but somewhat bigger than those. At the sunset, a complete calmness has settled, and because of this we had to stay for the night nine

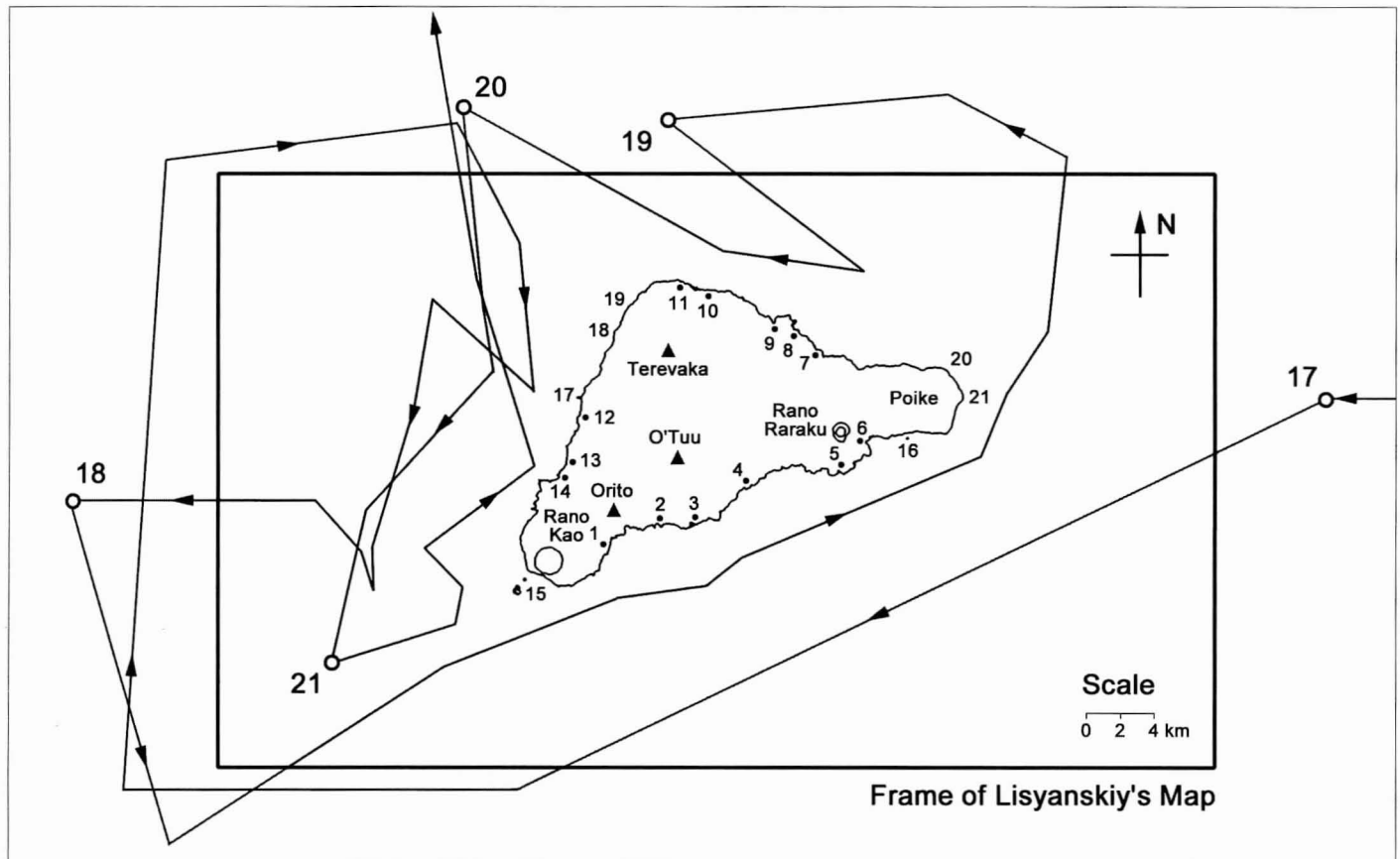
miles to the north of the Eastern cape<sup>14</sup>.

[April] 19<sup>th</sup>. At the dawn, a light breeze blew from S with high SW ripples. Having sighted the shores, we have made our way along the north one. My intention was to pass by it as close as [we did with] the East coast; however, faint wind and calmness, alternating with rain, did not allow us to do this, though the largest distance from the latter [coast] was not more than five miles. We could examine clearly not only capes and other places, constituting the main subject of travel descriptions, but also plantations and dwellings. This part of the island of the Holy Easter is not as populated as the east one. Between the North and Eastern capes, we have noticed four monuments, of which the first one was located in the middle, and consisted of a single statue<sup>15</sup>, the second and the third were of two statues each, and the latter – of three<sup>16</sup>. Coming closer to these, we saw that local inhabitants kindled fires in different places, which continued [burning] till the very evening. Maybe this meant an invitation for us to come to the shore. However, unable to find a single convenient anchorage anywhere, I continued my way to the west; meanwhile, the yawl was sent for observation of the current, which was not found, although we came across floating bands of sea-

weed all the time. I gave an order to fish out some of these and noticed that several were overgrown with a coral like substance, while the other had a piece of red coral with small shells by its root; when one was broken in half, it [appeared to] contain numerous sparkles, which under careful examination turned out to be quite small animals. The night was rainy.

[April] 20<sup>th</sup>. Since the weather remained bad, I was not disposed to anchor on this day either, but decided to come along the West shore. After midday, it became calm at first, but at three o'clock a light breeze started to blow and our ship made two tacks. Then the gloom fell; at about six o'clock, I descended to the south, where we stayed until the next morning. Going on from the SW, the ripples spread high surf over all the West side, on which we have noticed a multitude of fires and different vegetation, so it could be concluded that this [side] is as populated as the East one. During all the night, it was raining under variable winds from N to S.

On [April] 21<sup>st</sup> right at sunrise, we bound our way towards the shore, but gusty wind and dark clouds passing frequently forced us to heave to twice until 8 o'clock. At about nine, the sky became clear and our ship approached Cook's Bay. As the wind was blowing from SW, I decided not to an-



Conjectural reconstruction of sailing direction and timetable of the ship *Neva* plotted against the modern map of Rapa Nui (Van Tilburg 1994:22). Course nodes were adjusted to keep bearings and (if possible) distances from the shore determined using the map of Lisianskiy, assuming sighting compass to have better precision comparing to distance-measuring devices. Off-frame links were added to fit the description of the expedition. White circles correspond to the position of the ship in the morning of each day. Black circles and numbers show the locations of the following ceremonial sites and landmarks: 1 – Ahu Tahiri (Vinapu), 2 – Ahu Hanga Poukura, 3 – Ahu Hanga Tee (Vaihu), 4 – Ahu Akahanga, 5 – Ahu One Makihi, 6 – Ahu Tongariki at Hotu Iti, 7 – Ahu Te Pito Kura, 8 – Ahu at Hanga Kihikihi, 9 – Ahu Nau Nau at Anakena, 10 – Ahu Papa Te Kena, 11 – Ahu at Hanga Tavari, 12 – Ahu Hanga Poko Poko, 13 – Ahu Tahai complex, 14 – Ahu at Hanga Roa, 15 – Motu Nui, Motu Iti and Motu Kao Kao, 16 – Motu Marotiri, 17 – Motu Tautara, 18 – Cape Hereke, 19 – Motu Tavake, 20 – Cape O'Higgins, 21 – Cape Cumming.



chor there. Lest I should move away from the island without leaving some sign for the ship *Nadezhda*, in case she arrived after us, I sent Sr. Lieutenant Povalishin in a yawl, to take with him some knives, washers<sup>17</sup>, bottles etc. to give it all to the islanders, at the same time trying to explore the site and to measure the depth without coming ashore. At two o'clock in the afternoon, the yawl returned to the ship with some bananas, plantains<sup>18</sup>, sweet potatoes, igname [yam] and sugar cane; at six o'clock we came up with the East Cape and sailed down to the islands of Marquesas. If we could not report detailed and exact description of the customs and economy of the inhabitants of this land in the middle of the immense ocean, in all fairness it at least could be said, that we inspected its appearance with appropriate attention.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE ISLAND OF THE HOLY EASTER

The island of the Holy Easter was found by Dutch navigator Roggeveen in 1722. At first, the discovery of it was attributed to the Englishman Davis, but since the times of Cook and La Pérouse this opinion has changed. I have no intention to supply the details of locating this island, because a great deal has been written about it already, so I will put here only the things I witnessed myself.

We sought this island 40 miles away before reaching it, though the horizon was not completely clear; at fine weather, it seems to be visible some 60 miles away. At first, a gently sloping mountain with a hill to its right appeared to us to WNW. Sailing on 10 miles, we lost sight of the hill mentioned, but opposite to that to the left we noticed two small heights, both of which afterwards joined the mountain<sup>19</sup>. Circumnavigating this island quite close [to the shore], I did not find a single place where the ship could be anchored; the coast is precipitous everywhere, except two small coves at the East side behind the Southern point, and at the North one before reaching the North cape<sup>20</sup>.

The so-called Cook's Bay, to which I sent the yawl, apparently is the best place for anchorage; but it could be also dangerous under westerly and southwesterly winds, because in this case the ripples become so high that one cannot rely much on the anchor, especially by the very shore. Being 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> miles from the surf, we found that the depth in this place was 60 fathoms; ground: solid rock; Sr. Povalishin found [the depth of] 10 in one and a half cables from the shore, in three cables – 16 and in four – 23 fathoms. As it was written by La Pérouse, one must drop the anchor at 24 fathoms, this would be about five cables from the shore.

One can approach this bay freely from either side, heading down the wind; there is no chance to mistake with the anchoring place, because only opposite to this is a small sand bank, while all the rest are rocks from the North cape to the South one. As soon as you bring this bank to EtS or E and cover the stones, lying at the southern end<sup>21</sup>, you will find a depth of about 24 fathoms with sandy ground.

The local inhabitants are not that poor, as they were described by previous navigators. If they suffer complete shortage of cattle, which I cannot affirm, not having come ashore to this island, then at least they are supplied with many quite healthy and nutritious crops. Their dwellings could not com-

pete with the European ones, but, judging from the state of this people, are good enough. By the appearance, they resemble oblong hillocks or boats, facing their bottom upwards. Some houses stand solitary, while the others are in groups of two or three. No windows are seen; the doors are made in the middle of the construction, they are small and look like a cone. There is a field near to each dwelling, planted with bananas and sugar cane. There are many statues located along the shores, reliable images of which can be seen in the travel description of La Pérouse. They are hewn from stone in quite a rough image of a human head and a cover of a cylindrical kind. Apart from this, we have noticed many piles of stones with small blackish or white rocks on the top. It seems that they also serve as some kind of monuments.

The inhabitants of that place, to our observation, kindle fires always at about nine o'clock in the morning, from which it can be concluded that they cook the food outside of their dwellings at these hours and dine approximately at the same time. It is strange why the inhabitants of the island of St. Easter, as related by numerous navigators, suffer the lack of freshwater, when because of the rains falling frequently all the year round, they could make a reserve of it without any great trouble. There are many islands in the West Indies lacking any rivers and springs, but the inhabitants of those [places], which I witnessed myself, cover this shortage, digging vast pits in the ground and accumulating in these such a quantity of rainwater during the winter, that all the rest of the year they draw supplies of it without being in any need. La Pérouse assures that the inhabitants of the island of St. Easter, described by us, used to drink the seawater, and because of this do not take much care of freshwater storage.

Approaching Cook's Bay, we saw many islanders on the shore. Noticing our yawl, all of them immediately rushed to a small sand bank and were waiting for it to come closer with extreme impatience, expressing their joy with shouts and showing with gestures, where it could land more conveniently. Seeing that the yawl stopped, about 30 men instantly plunged into the water and in spite of high surf swam to the latter. Sr. Povalishin, repeating several times the word *teeo*<sup>22</sup> ([meaning] friend in their language) gave them a signal to come to his yawl not all at once, but one by one only. First of all, he handed down the bottle with a letter from me to Sr. Kruzenshtern, explaining to them by gestures to show it to the vessel as big as ours, when it came to this island. Then, he presented everyone with coins on a chain, which the islanders put immediately around their necks<sup>23</sup>, [he gave them also] washers, mustard bottles with fastened wooden planks, on which [the name of the ship] *Neva* was written, and knives. The latter were more pleasing for them than all the other things. I regretted much that I had not sent more of these, especially when I learned that a 60-year old elder swam to the yawl, bringing with him a small grass bag with cooked sweet potato and asked much for a knife. However he, obtaining several washers and coins, which I gave an order to string on a wire as earrings [pendants], was content with these gifts and returned [ashore], leaving the sailors not only sugar canes and the bag with [sweet] potato, but also a reed-woven mat, on which in place of a boat he swam to the yawl. Maybe this elder, during his life, had happened to see Europeans more

than once. Only he alone had quite long hair and a small brown beard; all the others had their hair cut, were black-haired and without any beards. Everyone had a bunch of reeds with [the help of] which, as it seemed, they maintained themselves on the water; the sailors pointed them to the ship *Neva*, but they expressed extreme regret that they could not swim so far. From this, as well as from the reed bunches tied together and the mat of the old man, it could be concluded that the boats mentioned by La Pérouse were not in use anymore on the island of St. Easter.

Sr. Povalishin thinks, that there were about 500 people on the shore at that time, among which there were small children. His hands were so full with his guests who swam up to the yawl, he could not discern whether all of the people [on the shore] were men, or there were also women in their number. Many of them were covered from the neck to knees with some kind of a cloak, and the others held pieces of white or motley-colored cloth, the size of a common handkerchief, and waved them continuously. According to his words and all who accompanied him, the islanders by their face and body complexion resemble dark-orange, or [either the hue of] South Europeans tanned in the heat of the sun. Narrow blue stripes were drawn over their faces, noses, neck, and hands; they had common looking ears, their figures were healthy, and some were up to six feet tall. The yawl was so close to the shore that one could clearly discern several dwellings and the stone, of which the closest monuments or statues were composed; they were, according to report of Sr. Povalishin, about 13 feet tall, one fourth of which constituted a cylinder, put over the head of the statue<sup>24</sup>.

On the handicrafts of the islanders I cannot judge exactly; but the purse and the mat, given by the old man to Sr. Povalishin as a gift, are worth a certain attention. The former, 15 inches in length, is woven of grass quite skillfully. The latter was  $4\frac{3}{4}$  feet long and  $15\frac{1}{2}$  inch wide; in the middle of this sugar canes were put and braided together with reeds; the lace, with which the mat was fastened and which formed the grips of the purse, despite being made of grass could compete in neatness with the flax one, with which we mistook it at first.

Cook locates the island of the Holy Easter under  $27^{\circ}06'$  S and  $109^{\circ}46'$  W. According to my observations, the middle of this lies under  $27^{\circ}9'23''$  S and  $109^{\circ}25'20''$  W, as the latitude of the Southern cape turned out to be  $27^{\circ}13'42''$  and its longitude was  $109^{\circ}03'41''$ . To get the latter, I measured up to thirty moon distances from the sun on the days 18<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. Small difference in longitudes, of course, would not seem important to anybody; in respect of the significant difference in latitude readings, it could be probably said that this was caused by a misprint, but not by a mistake of the one who for his special skills deserved the name of the First Navigator. With Mr. Cook, alas, we do not agree in consideration of the number of inhabitants of this island. Although I was not ashore myself, if one takes into account five hundred people who, noticing our ship, immediately gathered running from the nearby places, than what could be concluded about the other villages located on this island? Moreover, circumnavigating it, we have counted 23 houses, standing not far from the shore. Supposing that this number constituted only a half

of all the dwellings and that there are 40 persons living in each, the total would be 1840 people. Therefore, in my opinion, on the island of the Holy Easter there should be at least one and a half thousand inhabitants.

Of the trees, apart from the small ones and, what is more, few of those growing, none were noticed anywhere except for bananas, by which, as by another nourishing plants, the twentieth part of the island was planted, as it seems to me. The other places, even the very summits of the mountains, are overgrown by a short grass; from the sea, they offer quite a pleasant view to the eye of seafarers.

During our sail around this island several azimuth readings were taken, which according to two different sighting compasses have shown average magnetic declination of  $6^{\circ}12'0''$ .

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> This excerpt keeps the original spelling of the navigator's name (Urey Lisjanskiy) as he used it, while the notes give it in a modern way.
- <sup>2</sup> The islets of Motu Nui, Motu Iti, and Motu Kao Kao. Two of them, mentioned first, are separated by a narrow channel; Lisjanskiy described them as one islet.
- <sup>3</sup> Lisjanskiy, as well as James Cook (Beaglehole 1961), referred to the South coast from Vinapu to Hotu Iti as the "East coast" or "East side".
- <sup>4</sup> Regarding ceremonial platforms that have been described by Lisjanskiy, one should keep in mind that several *ahu* probably could escape his observation because the ship *Neva* was circumnavigating the island quite far from the coastline. The average distance ranged from about two to three nautical miles. From such a distance, a ten-meter tall formation on shore could be seen as an object of nine to six angular minutes in size (i.e., approximately one third to one fifth of a visible Moon diameter), quite discernible to the naked eye. Of course, smaller formations were less distinguishable; the situation could be improved significantly using any kind of telescopic equipment. High platforms with statues wearing topknots are prime candidates to consider. Most probably, inland *ahu* were not noticed because there was a greater likelihood they would be blocked by vegetation.
- <sup>5</sup> Two statues at the middle of the East side, according to Lisjanskiy's map, belonged to the locality somewhere between Akahanga and Hanga Tetenga. It is very tempting to suppose that he had seen Ahu Akahanga. This ceremonial center consists of three platforms merged together, the easternmost of which once held modest statues about 3 meters in height and belonging to an earlier period (Van Tilburg 1994:79-81), while the central and western parts bore *pukao*-crowned giants (the largest exceeding 5 meters in height, plus a topknot). If seen standing at the same time, the statues of this site fit quite well with the description of "... one seemed to be twice as higher as the other...both are enclosed with the same palisade".
- <sup>6</sup> The layered character of the outer caldera of Rano Kao is clearly visible from the sea. The detailed description of its complex geological structure can be found, for exam-

ple, in reports of the Russian expedition to Rapa Nui (Krendelew 1976:28-30). Geologists outline three principal layers corresponding to separate volcanic events; the lower layer, which is about 250-280 meters thick, features very pronounced stratification. It could easily be divided into more than twenty sub-layers, each measuring 12-15 meters in thickness. This structure corresponds to the gradual deposition of new lava layer by layer in a calm manner, resulting in a plain "sandwich" without large-scale structural defects, such as huge cavities or piles of embedded rocks.

<sup>7</sup> It is tempting to assume that these four statues belonged to Ahu Vai Uri at Cook's Bay or even Ahu Hanga Roa. However, the most relevant position of the ship *Neva* for this passage on Lisianskiy's map is about one nautical mile to the northwest of Motu Tautara, i.e., quite far from the Tahai-Vai Uri Complex. Thus, Ahu Hanga Poko Poko [Englert No. 25], situated much closer to the given point, might be a better candidate for this description.

<sup>8</sup> It could be quite logically associated with Ahu Vinapu (Ahu Tahiri by Thomson, 1889); e.g., Heyerdahl (1961:65). This impressive shrine once held seven giants (three of which were more than 5 meters tall (Mulloy 1961:109) and was beyond any doubt visible well out to sea. It seems that this platform somehow escaped mention or was recorded in a perplexing way in the account of Captain James Cook; his exploring party reported three *ahu* on the East shore designed for four *moai* each, of which only three were standing over a single shrine, while the others were already toppled (Beaglehole 1961). George Forster, who accompanied the Great Navigator, gives a description of a perfectly-fitted stone wall built for seven statues, four of which were still standing, one without its *pukao* (Forster 1986:256). Forster mentions this platform as "Hanga Te-bau" (Hanga Te Pau, another name of Vinapu Bay (Cristino, Vargas, and Izaurieta 1981) supplying the names of the six images belonging to it.

<sup>9</sup> The platform bearing three statues standing not far from Vinapu could be Ahu Hanga Hahave, Ahu Hanga Poukura, or even Ahu Hanga Tee (Englert 1948:531-532). Perhaps it was the shrine with three statues described by Cook. Platforms mentioned as numbers 4 and 5 must be located somewhere at Hanga Tu'u Hata (maybe including Ahu One Makihi), followed by the plantations of the Hotu Iti. The area described must be closer than Ahu Tongariki because the latter is supposed to have been already in ruins for a long time (Cristino and Vargas 2002).

<sup>10</sup> This reference could be significant, as it might describe Rano Raraku (probably reached by Cook's exploring party but not recognized as a quarry, perhaps because the place was blocked by vegetation (Heyerdahl 1961:55) or either Poike (in the light of possible utilization of the Poike ditch for agriculture, i.e., to protect plantations (Flenley and Bahn 2002:154).

<sup>11</sup> It is hard to evaluate this statement, as the author reports two coves usable for the anchorage at the South Coast

later in the text. According to Métraux (1940:9), the sandy beach in this area is also present at Vaihu.

<sup>12</sup> *Pipi horeko*, small stone piles serving as boundary or *tapu* markers. They may also have been used as landmarks related to fishing (Van Tilburg 1994:63).

<sup>13</sup> The birds described earlier in the same chapter include stormy petrels and terns. There were also "white birds the size of the petrels", "black, as big as a common goose, with quite long whitish beaks". Then followed a description of another creature: "During all the storm we were followed by a bird as big as gosling, resembling an albatross from afar, with a thick head, short neck and wedge-shaped tale; the upper part of the wings, head, tail and the beak are black. Considering the head, the beak is too long with yellow knob at the end. The back is white with blackish spots, the lower part of the wings is white with black bands at the ends." Later in the text appears the second reference: "...we were visited by a bird similar to the one we had seen during the last storm, with the difference that its head was white and the tail was not wedge-shaped. It quite resembled Buffon's *briseur d'os*". N. V. Dumitrashko suggests that the latter passage describes the giant petrel (comments to the Second Edition of Lisianskiy, 1947:275).

<sup>14</sup> While the other capes mentioned correspond to their position on modern maps, the easternmost point of the island on Lisianskiy's chart is Cape O'Higgins, not Cape Cumming.

<sup>15</sup> It was most probably Ahu Te Pito Kura with the *moai* "Paro", the largest image successfully erected on an *ahu* and the statue toppled last (Englert 1948:523; Routledge 1919:173). Together with its red scoria *pukao*, the overall height of this monument measured from sea level was about 16.3 meters (Smith 1961:204). It was no doubt a prominent feature, catching the attention of the beholder, even if seen from two nautical miles away from the shore (as Lisianskiy did, according to his map).

<sup>16</sup> At La Pérouse, the ship *Neva* changed her course from southeast to the west. The other platforms observed were most probably situated westward from Hanga Ho'onu, being described as landmarks passed by the ship upon reaching North Cape. According to the list of the *ahu* (Englert 1948), there are several shrines featuring at least two statues in this area: two platforms at Hanga Kihi Kihi [No. 91, 95], Ahu Nau Nau [No. 86] at 'Anakena, Ahu Papa Te Kena [No. 66], and, Ahu at Hanga Tavari [No. 59]. Thus, one can quite reasonably assume that Lisianskiy probably witnessed one of the shrines at Ovahe and maybe Ahu Nau Nau with two statues standing. A platform with three statues is most probably Ahu Papa Te Kena, because, after passing Cape San Juan the ship changed her course again and headed northwest.

<sup>17</sup> The Russian word "*naboyka*" used here commonly refers to printed cloth (Dal 1881:378). However, Lisianskiy's way of describing cloth and garments used by the natives is completely different from the common usage of this term, which he mentions together with coins forming improvised necklaces. The word itself may also de-



- fine something used for hammering; it could be either small metallic pieces used to secure the nails or maybe decorating the head of the nail, etc. In light of this, the word "washer" was selected to fit the idea better.
- <sup>18</sup> Plantain is one of the species of banana (*Musa paradisiaca*). In Chapter 6, devoted to Marquesas and Washington Islands, Lisianskiy mentioned both bananas and plantains under the local name "meika" (in Rapanui, "maika").
  - <sup>19</sup> "High mountain" is Maunga Terevaka and Poike is the hill; upon closer inspection, Poike projects itself over Terevaka and covers it, because the latter is several miles more distant from the beholder looking westward. "Two heights" are Maunga Orito and Maunga 'o Tu'u, with surrounding hills.
  - <sup>20</sup> Vinapu Bay, then probably Hanga Poukura or Hanga Tee (Vaihu) [Métraux 1940:9], and 'Anakena.
  - <sup>21</sup> The way of spotting the anchorage at Hanga Roa, given by Lisianskiy, is similar to that of James Cook; the rocks to the south are the islets below Orongo, blocked by the cliffs of Rano Kao from this point.
  - <sup>22</sup> Misspelled "taio", Tahitian for "friend" and "friendship".
  - <sup>23</sup> The bottle with the letter was most probably lost, but the coins might survive. If found during excavations, they could serve a good reference to the early 19th century.
  - <sup>24</sup> This description may add several statues to the total number witnessed standing on the *ahu*, if the platform observed by Povalishin is not the same discussed in note 7. Forster (1986:252) reported three statues standing during the time of his visit at the *ahu* the islanders called Hanga Roa.

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## HAUMAKA TOURS

Ramón EDMUNDS and Josefina NAHOE  
Correo Isla de Pascua  
RAPA NUI, Chile

e-mail: haumaka@entelchile.net  
voicemail/fax for USA and Canada: (310) 754-6000 x1548  
phone/fax on Rapa Nui: (011-56-32) 100-274

Look for our website! <<www.HaumakaTours.com>>